

THE GULL

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GOLDEN GATE AUDUBON SOCIETY



FOUNDED 1917



Anthony DeCicco

Kids on an Eco-Education field trip view an Osprey nest from Pier 94 with naturalist John Muir Laws, a GGAS board member.

Kids and Families Connect With Their Environment

What tastes better, pickleweed or iceplant? (*Most kids say pickleweed.*) How would you describe the smell of a California Bay Laurel leaf? (*Mint, bubblegum, and cologne are common responses.*) Can you imitate the gurgling call of a nesting Snowy Egret? (*Think Donald Duck popping bubbles.*) Can you move your arms as fast as the wings of an Anna's Hummingbird, 40 to 50 times per second? If we plant more Marsh Gumplants how does that help the California Clapper Rail? What happens when you touch a Giant Green Sea Anemone? Can you cross the creek by climbing over the boulders? Can kids teach grownups and make a difference in helping the environment? Yes!

Asking questions. Encouraging kids to use their senses to discover the wonders of the natural world. Stirring them up just enough to shake off the layers of modern urban life. Using the outdoors as a classroom where fun and self-discovery come first. Empowering children to believe that their positive actions can make a difference for themselves, their communities, and their environment.

During 2011–2012, the Eco-Education Program took close to 700 third, fourth, and fifth graders on 50 weekday field trips to discover and protect their local wetland and riparian habitats near the communities of East Oakland, north Richmond, and

ECO-EDUCATION continued on page 12

Settlement Protects Birds on Bay

Not all the thousands of spectator boats filling San Francisco Bay for the America's Cup this fall and next summer will be viewing the sleek racing yachts. A few will be watching and monitoring birds, thanks to the advocacy efforts of Golden Gate Audubon and our allies.

San Francisco city officials signed a settlement agreement with GGAS and other community groups in July that will fund a \$150,000 study of how events like the America's Cup affect bird populations on the open bay. The study is part of a package of measures that will protect birds during the America's Cup events and provide scientific data to help protect them in the future.

"For the first time, we'll have information on the numbers of birds in the central bay and how they respond to boats and other disturbances," said GGAS Conservation Director Mike Lynes. "This will help us minimize future disruptions of birds on the open water—whether those disruptions come from daily marine traffic, special events like races, or unexpected disasters like the Cosco Busan oil spill."

Golden Gate Audubon had filed an appeal of the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the America's Cup events, concerned that race organizers were not paying adequate attention to its potential impact on wildlife. The America's Cup's EIR predicted that the events would draw up to 1,800 spectator boats with 18,000

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ROSTER

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The Golden Gate Audubon Society was founded January 25, 1917, and became a chapter of National Audubon in 1948. Golden Gate Audubon Supporting Membership is \$35 per year. Renewals should be sent to the Golden Gate Audubon office. The board of directors meets six times per year (schedule can be obtained from the main office).

The Gull is published six times per year. Special third-class postage paid in Oakland, CA. Send address changes to office promptly. The post office does not forward *The Gull*.

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Design and layout: e.g. communications

One Audubon

Every year, billions of birds undertake seasonal migrations from their wintering grounds to their breeding grounds and back again. So wouldn't it make sense for the various Audubon groups concerned about the welfare of birds to work together? Of course! (Did you know that there are 50 National Audubon centers in the United States, plus 470 Audubon chapters, including 49 in California alone?)

This summer, I attended a conference of eight large urban Audubon chapters. Directors from New York City, western Pennsylvania (Pittsburgh), Denver, Tucson, Seattle, Portland (Oregon), and San Diego joined forces in Denver to discuss how to make cities more bird-friendly. Most of us grapple with similar issues, including local political battles to protect habitat and reduce threats such as feral cats and off-leash dogs in protected wildlife areas.

Bay Area birds have benefited from collaboration when GGAS and the American Bird Conservancy (ABC) borrowed from the experiences of New York City Audubon. That chapter led a successful campaign for bird-safe building guidelines in 2007. We and ABC then adapted New York's model and convinced San Francisco in 2011 to pass an ordinance that is the strongest such law in the country. (See <http://bit.ly/PMOVwj>.) We, in turn, have shared our Standards for Bird Safe Buildings with Audubon chapters up and down the Pacific Flyway that are working to pass their own guidelines.

Cooperation along the Pacific Flyway is a no-brainer for protecting migratory species. Here in the Bay Area, we work to protect the colony of endangered California Least Terns at the Alameda Wildlife Refuge. San Diego Audubon is working for Least Tern recovery in Mission Bay and south to the Tijuana estuary. There is much that we can do together to support this vulnerable species.

The National Audubon Society (NAS) acknowledged the logic of chapter collaboration in its 2012 strategic plan by organizing its programs around the four major flyways and bringing staff from local chapters into the discussion. GGAS Conservation Director Mike Lynes will join a Pacific Flyway team that assesses Important Bird Areas, and GGAS board member Karim Al-Khafaji has agreed to serve as an NAS regional director representing pan-flyway chapter issues.

NAS and the chapters have not always worked well together, so I am cautiously optimistic about these efforts. At the very least, I hope you can see that your support of Golden Gate Audubon is part of a larger effort to protect birds regionally, nationally, and internationally. When you donate to Golden Gate Audubon, your money is working across flyways as well as locally.



—Mark Welther, Executive Director

Special Thanks and Other Board News

Please join me in thanking Diane Ross-Leech as she steps down after four exceptional years as president of the GGAS board of directors. Diane was elected in June to her second term and will remain on the board through 2015.

Thanks also go to departing members Mark Mushkat and Rich Walkling. Both served for four years, Mark as treasurer and Finance Committee chair, and Rich as vice president.

We welcome Bob Lewis and Al Peters back to the board; both served from 2002 to 2009. Bob, a photographer and GGAS instructor and field trip leader, returns to the Education Committee. Al, a former mayor of Piedmont and a retired CPA, returns to the Finance Committee.

At the June board elections, Whitney Dotson was also elected to a second term, serving through 2015. David Anderson begins his first elected term.

Intern Restores Habitat and Career

Salt grass? Gumplant? Sticky monkey-flower? Rachel Spadafore knows them all. And she's helped scores of Golden Gate Audubon volunteers restore prime habitat along the bay by returning these and other native plants to the San Francisco and East Bay shorelines.

For the past year, Rachel served as our first restoration coordinator. Her work involved leading teams of volunteers on monthly workdays at Pier 94 in San Francisco and the Martin Luther King Jr. Regional Shoreline in Oakland.

Rachel formed her love of nature growing up in the Allegheny foothills of Pennsylvania. She received a master's in environmental management at the University of San Francisco, where she was inspired by a professor with expertise in tidal wetlands restoration. But her career plans hit a brick wall after graduation due to the recession. There were few openings for newly minted environmental scientists. Rachel ended up taking an office job for a green building company.

When she found out we were looking for a restoration intern, she jumped at the chance to get back into the field, even if just a couple of times a month. "It was so refreshing after being in a cube for almost a year," she said. "I felt I'd gotten back to who I was and what I enjoyed."

On a typical Saturday workday, Rachel would stop by the GGAS office at 7 a.m. to pick up tools and birding scopes. She'd arrive at Pier 94 or the MLK shoreline before the volunteers to assess the progress of recent plantings or to decide which invasives should be the focus of that day's attack. As the volunteers worked, she'd point out birds and their vocalizations. When they were done, she'd lead a bird walk to explain how wildlife would benefit from the restored habitat.

Rachel's internship helped restore not just the two sites but her stalled career. She was hired by Audubon California for a full-time job as a restoration ecologist. She now oversees work at 17-acre Arambaru Island near Tiburon, which supports various mini-ecosystems, such as tidal wet-



Lee Karney

Clockwise from left: Rachel Spadafore, Jonathan Barber, and Kisha Mitchell-Mellor.

lands and vernal pools.

Oversight of the Pier 94 and MLK workdays has been passed to Jonathan Barber and Kisha Mitchell-Mellor, who have both worked as volunteers for GGAS restoration programs.

We thank Rachel for her many contributions and wish her well in her new position, and we welcome Kisha and Jonathan to the program. Come out to one of our workdays and meet them.

—Ilana DeBare, Communications Director

GGAS News and Inspiration—Right to Your In-box

Your *Gull* arrives six times a year. Did you know that you can hear about birding news and events from GGAS every month—or even every week?

Sign up for our free monthly e-mail newsletter, "This Month at Golden Gate Audubon," and you'll receive an e-mail about upcoming events and breaking GGAS conservation and other news. You can register for the e-newsletter by contacting ggas@goldengateaudubon.org.

Then sign up to receive our new blog, "Golden Gate Birder." Twice a week, you'll get an e-mail with an inspiring short essay and photos about Bay Area birding or conservation. Here are some recent examples: Bob Lewis with tips on how to take great bird photos; Dave Quady on the search for a Northern Gannet at the Farallons; Phila Rogers on what makes someone a "birder" versus a "bird-watcher"; and Dan Murphy on Bank Swallows in the riprap at Fort Funston.

To view the blog, go to www.goldengateaudubon.org/blog. To have it delivered to your e-mail in-box, click on the "follow" box on the right side of the page.



PROTECTING AQUATIC PARK

Building sites at the northeast corner of Berkeley's Aquatic Park will get special attention in the proposed rezoning of West Berkeley. The Berkeley City Council recently decided to refer protections for the park to the planning commission.

The 70 acres of tidal lagoons are home to Mallards, American Coots, and waterbird species including Snowy Egret. Many other avian visitors pass through during migration or overwinter in the park.

As a result of Golden Gate Audubon's comments on Berkeley's Environmental Impact Report (EIR), some bird-safe building standards will be applied to large buildings in West Berkeley, representing an opening for a comprehensive citywide ordinance sought by the GGAS East Bay Conservation Committee.

The City Council put the zoning revision on the November ballot, but no master use permit for the properties adjacent to the park can be approved until measures to protect and improve "the environmental, recreational, and aesthetic qualities of Aquatic Park" are adopted.

Golden Gate Audubon recommends several revisions. Height limits could preserve views of the hills that maintain sightlines for migrating birds. Building setbacks could buffer light, shadow, and noise impacts on the lagoon. The ordinance requires that 10 percent of each site be reserved for public open space, allowing more separation between the built and natural environments.

Join us for a walk around Aquatic Park on September 22 from 10 a.m. to noon, guided by GGAS member Toni Mester and Mark Liolios of EGRET. The level walk is two miles on a paved trail and wheelchair accessible, and starts at the Waterside Café on Bolivar Drive. The focus will be park features that may be impacted by the West Berkeley Project as well as the Aquatic Park Improvement Program (APIP), whose Draft EIR is due in September. Preregistration is not required. For more information, contact Toni at 510.848.8234 or Berkeleyspann@comcast.net.

FAMILIES INVITED TO PRESIDIO BIRD COUNT

On Sunday, September 9, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., experienced birders will lead teams of kids and their families on different routes throughout the Presidio for the annual Family Bird Count. After an easy one-hour walk counting birds, groups will gather at El Polin Spring to tally their numbers during lunch. The day will conclude with the kids announcing the final counts. Last spring, the count yielded 50 species. A "binocular bootcamp and birding basics" will be offered before the count at 10:30 a.m. RSVP to nature@presidiotrust.gov or 415.561.4449. Binoculars provided!

WORKDAYS TO BENEFIT THE SNOWY PLOVER

On the second Monday of each month, volunteers from Golden Gate Audubon will partner with the National Park Service for a two-hour cleanup of the beach at the Crissy Wildlife Protection Area in San Francisco. The next workdays are September 10 and October 8, 10 a.m. to noon. The group meets at the Warming Hut in the Presidio (go to www.presidio.gov for map). All equipment, such as gloves and buckets, is provided. We are looking for volunteers who will become familiar with the Snowy Plovers and their Crissy WPA environment, and can help six

or more times a year. Contact Volunteer Coordinator Noreen Weeden at nweeden@goldengateaudubon.org to sign up.

RESTORE HABITAT AT GGAS SITES

You are invited to join us for our monthly workdays at our restoration sites. For site details and directions, please go to www.goldengateaudubon.org/volunteer.

Pier 94, San Francisco—Saturdays, September 1 and October 6, 9 a.m.–noon

MLK Jr. Shoreline Park, Oakland—Saturdays, September 15 and October 20, 10 a.m.–1 p.m.

BURROWING OWL DOCENT TRAINING FOR NEW SEASON

Every year, a small number of Western Burrowing Owls spend the winter at Cesar Chavez Park in Berkeley. When the owls arrive in fall, Golden Gate Audubon docents point them out to park users and talk about the need to protect these locally endangered birds. Docents are encouraged to make a commitment for site visits at least twice each month from September through March. Dates and times are flexible. Anyone interested in volunteering is welcome to join the program. Training for the new season will be held on Saturday, September 15, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

CONSERVATION CORNER continued on page 10

Mark Your Calendar for the 2012 Christmas Bird Counts

You don't want to miss participating in the upcoming Christmas Bird Counts, so note these dates in your calendar! The Oakland CBC will be held on Sunday, December 16. The San Francisco CBC is on Thursday, December 27. Details about how to sign up for both the counts and the celebratory dinners will appear in the November-December *Gull*.

Help GGAS Meet and Greet

Golden Gate Audubon relies on volunteers to help out at various events. Volunteers not only support our staff but also get to meet our members and engage the public. On October 6, we'll have a table and offer activities for kids at the annual North Richmond Shoreline Festival held 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. at Point Pinole Regional Shoreline in the East Bay. We are also seeking volunteers to assist our Speakers Series programs in Berkeley and San Francisco (see page 5) and to coordinate the December 16 dinner for participants in the Oakland Christmas Bird Count. If you can assist at these events, contact Noreen Weeden at nweeden@goldengateaudubon.org.

Seeking Swifts

Larry Schwitters

San Francisco: Thursday, September 20—7 p.m. refreshments, 7:30 program

Launched five years ago, Vaux's Happening enlists volunteers to locate, observe, and gather data about communal roost sites used by Vaux's Swifts in migration. Chimneys have proved to be among the most significant sites. Vaux's Happening quickly expanded into an effort to raise awareness of and try to preserve as many sites as possible. Over the last 10 migrations, observers have documented nearly four million Vaux's Swift roosting events from San Diego to the

Yukon. Here in the immediate Bay Area, the swifts roost in a stack at the McNear brickyard in San Rafael (see field trip, page 7). Larry Schwitters will talk about this ongoing citizen science project and share images captured by chimney surveillance cameras. He will also touch on his search for waterfalls in the Pacific Northwest that host nesting Black Swifts.

Larry Schwitters has spent 30 years in what he describes as "the trenches of public education," mostly as a middle school science teacher and coach in the Seattle area. He now works on the Vaux's Swift project year-round, an endeavor that is nearly full-time during migration. His website for the project (<http://vauxhappening.org>) includes information on the most active sites and the counts.

San Francisco Speaker Series: First Unitarian Universalist Church and Center, 1187 Franklin Street at Geary. Visit www.uusf.org/visitors_faq.html, and use the Map It! link on the left for directions. Public transit, street parking, and parking in a lot for a fee are available.



Vaux's Swifts entering chimney in San Rafael.

Richard Pavsek/SHENmaker@MSN.com

Bees and Flowers: A Continuing Love Affair

Gordon Frankie

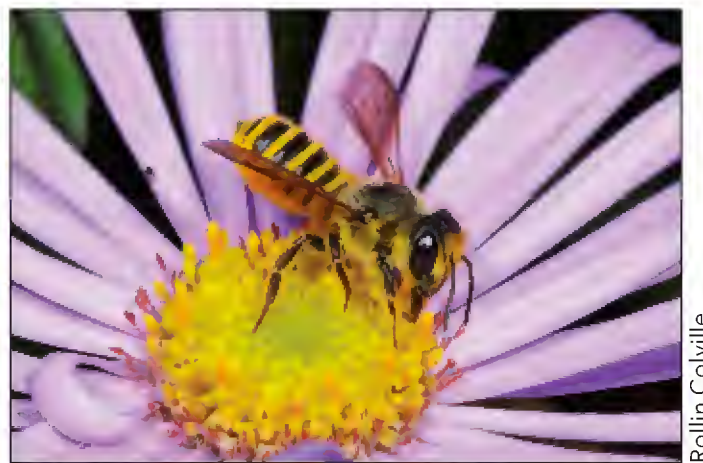
Berkeley: Thursday, October 18—7 p.m. refreshments, 7:30 program

Native bees and native flowering plants have evolved together to produce a variety of relationships. Some relationships allow bees to use several plant types for pollen and nectar resources. This is the case in California with many native bee species. The flexibility enables bees to use garden plants and other resources in urban areas for reproduction and survival. Statewide research conducted by Gordon Frankie and others at UC Berkeley and UC Davis has shown that

interesting patterns of relationships can be used to plan pollinator habitat gardens that will conserve native bees. He will talk about these patterns, which you can apply to your garden.

Gordon Frankie is a professor and research entomologist in the Division of Insect Biology, College of Natural Resources, UC Berkeley. His specialty is the behavioral ecology of solitary bees in the wildlands and urban environments of California and Costa Rica. He also teaches conservation and environmental problem-solving. His lab at UC Berkeley studies native bees and their preferred flowers. The website (<http://helpabee.org>) contains indispensable information about gardening for bees.

Berkeley Speaker Series: Northbrae Community Church, 941 The Alameda (between Solano and Marin). Directions: www.northbrae.org/directions.html.



Megachile fidelis.

Rollin Colville

Release Party for First GGAS Calendar

On Friday, October 19, we'll unveil our gorgeous 2013 Birds of the San Francisco Bay Area calendar at an open house from 1 to 5 p.m. at our Berkeley office, 2530 San Pablo Avenue, Suite G. We received nearly a hundred entries to the contest. The final selections for the calendar include many of your favorite Bay Area photographers. The \$20 calendar is a fundraiser for Golden Gate Audubon, and we have a limited supply—so you'll want to get yours soon. The calendars will make great holiday gifts. Thanks go to all the talented photographers for contributing their amazing work.

Take Flight on Friday Nights

On November 9 and 16, Angela's Bistro at 2301 Central Avenue in Alameda will highlight Golden Gate Audubon in its Friday Flights wine-tasting events to benefit GGAS and the colony of endangered California Least Terns at the Alameda Wildlife Refuge. Join us between 5:30 and 7:30 p.m. to talk terns—and the presidential election results?—while enjoying local wines.

Angela's Friday Flights program supports local charities by hosting a weekly wine tasting on the patio (or indoors if the weather is inclement). Board members and volunteers from the nonprofits get a chance to talk with members of the community. Local wineries donate the wines, both red and white. Each guest pays \$10 for two tastes. Additional tastes can be purchased for \$5 each. Bread and dipping sauce are served free with the wines. Guests can order food from the Angela's Bistro appetizer menu.



FIELD TRIPS

STEVE LOMBARDI, COORDINATOR

\$	Entrance fee
	Biking trip

Field trips are open to birders of all ages and levels of experience. To ensure the safety and enjoyment of participants, dogs are not allowed on trips. There are no exceptions to this policy unless expressly stated in the field trip announcement. For questions about individual field trips, contact the leaders. For updates to the trips, go to www.goldengateaudubon.org.

San Francisco Botanical Garden

Sundays, September 2, October 7

8 – 10:30 a.m.

Ginny Marshall, ginnybirder@sbcglobal.net; Dominik Mosur, polksatata@yahoo.com; Alan Ridley, allanrid@pacbell.net; Helen McKenna, 415.566.3241 (Leaders vary by month.)

Meet at the front gate of the garden in Golden Gate Park, 9th Ave. at Lincoln Way. This monthly trip is oriented toward helping beginning birders develop their skills in spotting and identifying birds. The garden charges \$7/person if you are not an SF resident or garden member. Bring identification for residency and membership status.

Tilden Regional Park

Friday, September 7—canceled

Alan Kaplan

Please note that Alan's first Friday trip this month is canceled.

Monterey Bay Pelagic Trips

September 7, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 28

Shearwater Journeys,

www.shearwaterjourneys.com

These are classic summertime trips for albatrosses and shearwaters, whales and dolphins. Cost: \$104 per person for GGAS members, nonrefundable. Fuel surcharges, if needed, are not included. Parking is \$7. Send payment and full name, address, phone, cell, and e-mail of each person to Shearwater Journeys, PO Box 190, Hollister, CA 95024. \$

Half Moon Bay Pelagic Trips

September 9, 10, 22, 23, and 24;

October 1, 7, and 28

Shearwater Journeys,

www.shearwaterjourneys.com

Cook's Petrel is a top target on this trip, and this is the prime time of year to find petrels. Cost: \$146 per person for GGAS members, nonrefundable. Fuel surcharges, if needed, are not included. Parking is free. Send payment with the full name, address, phone, cell, and e-mail of each person to Shearwater Journeys, PO Box 190, Hollister, CA 95024. \$

Wildcat Canyon Regional Park

Contra Costa County

Friday, September 14

Alan Kaplan, LNKPLN@earthlink.net, 510.526.7609 (messages)

Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the Alvarado Staging Area parking lot on Park Ave., off McBryde Ave., just past the park office. We'll walk up Belgum Trail to the old sanatorium site, recently suggested as a fall migrant trap. Some off-trail walking. Restrooms at start. Bring water.

Bear Valley Staging Area

Contra Costa County

Friday, September 14, 9 a.m. – noon

Bob Lewis, Bob@wingbeats.org; Kathryn Sechrist, hugwrangler@gmail.com

We will look for birds of the oak woodlands—woodpeckers, chickadees, titmice, nuthatches—as well as birds on the reservoir. This EBMUD property is a bit hilly at the start, but then gets easier and is a beautiful walk with views of the reservoir, and lots of opportunities for our familiar birds of the forest and grasslands. Kathryn, a specialist in oak woodland habitat, will tell us about some of her research as we wander the trails. Significant rain will result in muddy trails and will cancel trip.

Take Bear Creek Rd. through Tilden Regional Park and cross San Pablo Dam Rd. Continue along Bear Creek Rd. for about 4 miles (passing intersection for Happy Valley Rd.). Entrance to EBMUD parking area is on the left just after Happy Valley.

Coastal San Francisco

Saturday, September 15

Dan Murphy, murphsf@comcast.net

Meet at 8 a.m. in the parking lot between South Lake and Middle Lake in Golden Gate Park. We will bird the Chain-of-Lakes, then drive to Lands End, Lake Merced, and other western San Francisco birding spots in a search of early fall migrants. In the past we have seen a large variety of migrating flycatchers, vireos, warblers, sparrows, and finches. We may see early hawk migration as well. We plan to end the day between 2 and 3 p.m. at Lake Merced. Wear layers for variable coastal weather. Bring lunch and liquids. We will not finish the trip where we start, so make carpool arrangements with that in mind.

The parking lot is just past the second stop sign on Chain-of-Lakes Dr. from the intersection of 41st and Lincoln. From Kennedy Dr., turn left at Chain-of-Lakes Dr. and drive just past the lake to the left.

Aquatic Park and Waterfront

San Francisco

Saturdays, September 15, October 20, November 18, 10 – 11:30 a.m.

Carol Kiser, 415.447.5000

On this walk for children and beginners, and all others, we will look for resident and migrating birds. Meet at the entrance to the Hyde Street Pier at Hyde and Jefferson on the western border of Fisherman's Wharf. Nearby parking is at the foot of Van Ness Ave. (free for 4 hours), Ghirardelli Square, and the Anchorage.

California Audubon Bobcat Ranch

Yolo County

Wednesday, September 19

8:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Rich Cimino, rschimino@gmail.com

Bobcat Ranch is a lovely area of blue oak woodland and rangeland in the foothills west of Winters. Visiting the ranch is by special arrangement. The ranch biologist will lead us on an easy walk to look for woodland and grassland birds, including

Lark Sparrow, Golden Eagle, and Lewis's Woodpecker. Bring lunch and water. Directions will be provided to registered participants. Contact Rich to sign up.

Corona Heights

San Francisco

Fridays, September 21, October 19
8 – 10 a.m.

Brian Fitch; Dominik Mosur, polskatata@yahoo.com (Leaders vary by month.)

Meet in front of the Randall Museum, 199 Museum Way, at the end of Museum Way off Roosevelt. We will circle Corona Heights, checking the east canyon woodland and north forest for residents and migrants, as well as monitoring the hilltop scrub and south cliff.

Bodega Bay Pelagic Trips

September 21 and 27; October 26

Shearwater Journeys,
www.shearwaterjourneys.com

Trips out of Bodega Bay turn up rare seabirds and yield high-quality lists of seabirds and whales. Cost: \$150 for GGAS members, nonrefundable. Fuel surcharges, if needed, are not included. Parking is free. Send payment with full name, address, phone, cell, and e-mail of each person to Shearwater Journeys, PO Box 190, Hollister, CA 95024. \$

Las Gallinas and McNear Brickyard

Marin County

Saturday, September 22

Rusty Scalf, rscalf@sonic.net

Meet at 3 p.m. at Las Gallinas parking lot (www.bahiker.com/northbayhikes/lgwp.html). We will spend 2–3 hours birding these productive ponds and the fields beyond. Anticipate seeing waterfowl, shorebirds, raptors, and terrestrial species like meadowlarks and pipits. At 6:30 p.m. we will convene at the McNear brickyard site, Point San Pedro Rd. and McNear Brickyard Rd. in San Rafael. The decommissioned brickyard stacks are a staging site for migratory Vaux's Swifts. Some of us will do an organized swift count. Sunset will be at 7:07 p.m.; the half hour following sunset is when the swifts form their evening flock before descending into the

stacks. This trip is run in conjunction with Larry Schwitters's Speakers Series talk on September 20 (see page 5). E-mail Rusty for detailed directions to the brickyard.

Millbrae–Foster City

San Mateo County

Sunday, September 23

Michelle Labbe and Jeremy Andersen, 413.687.1179, 508.566.9555, labbemichelle@gmail.com

Meet at Millbrae BART station at 9:15 a.m. The trip will follow the SF Bay Trail to Foster City (about 7 miles) and continue around Foster City (about 6.5 miles). The flat route is mostly paved, on bike lanes

and city streets. Bring lunch and liquids. Bicycle helmet required. Reservations not necessary but an e-mail or phone call would be appreciated. Rain cancels.

Transit: East Bay BART riders passing through MacArthur BART at 8:15 a.m. will take the train for SFO/Millbrae. Return will be from the Belmont Caltrain station. Caltrain is on an hourly schedule on weekends; it departs Belmont at 1:48 p.m. and arrives in Millbrae at 2:08 p.m. **Car:** Follow US 101 south for about 12 miles. Take exit 420 for Millbrae Ave., turn right at E. Millbrae Ave., and then right at N. Rollins Rd. to parking lot.

Lake Merritt and Lakeside Park

Oakland, Alameda County

Wednesdays, September 26,
October 24, 9:30 a.m. – noon

FIELD TRIPS continued on page 8

Classes

GOLDEN GATE AUDUBON

Birds of the Bay Area—NOW FULL WITH LONG WAITLIST

Rusty Scalf and Eddie Bartley

Wednesday lectures, October 10 – November 14, 7 – 9 p.m., plus weekend field trips, October 13 – November 16, the last one being an overnight trip

Note new location: Ed Roberts Campus, 3075 Adeline Street, Berkeley

Classes will be held at this new building above the east side of the Ashby BART station. The venue is easily reachable for people coming from both the East Bay and San Francisco. Parking is available behind the building. Field trips will visit habitats of all types, including fresh- and saltwater wetlands, woodlands, and grassland savannah, to study the avian denizens of these communities. Fee: \$105 for GGAS members, \$125 for nonmembers. Sign up by calling the GGAS office at 510.843.2222.

Beginning Bird-watching

Anne Hoff

Wednesday lectures, October 17 – November 7, 7 – 8:30 p.m., plus Saturday morning field trips, October 20 – November 10, starting at 9 a.m.

Location: GGAS office, 2530 San Pablo Avenue, Berkeley

This great introduction to bird-watching will familiarize you with the tools of the trade: binoculars, field guides, scopes, and more; show you places to watch birds in the Bay Area; and help you learn to identify the birds of the bay and uplands. Fall is an ideal time to begin, with shorebirds and ducks returning to the bay, and winter land birds coming from the mountains to join residents. Fee: \$85 for GGAS members, \$105 for nonmembers. Sign up by calling the GGAS office at 510.843.2222.

BIRDING WITH JOE MORLAN—NEW LOCATION

Beginning with the fall semester, Joe Morlan's classes meet 7–9:15 p.m. in room 218 of the John Adams Campus at City College of San Francisco, 1860 Hayes Street, between Masonic and Ashbury. Free parking is in the lot adjacent to the building. Field Ornithology II and Field Ornithology III start on September 12 and September 13, respectively. For class descriptions and information on fees and registration, go to <http://fog.ccsf.edu/~jmorlan/fall12.htm>. Registrants receive a \$15 discount for preregistering a week early.

FIELD TRIPS from page 7

Hilary Powers, 510.834.1066,
hilary@powersedit.com; Ruth Tobey,
510.528.2093, ruthtobey@gmail.com

Meet at the large spherical cage near the Nature Center at Perkins and Bellevue. We may see some early winter migrants in September, and the in-flow should be under way in October as Lake Merritt begins its busy birding season.

Take the 12, N, or NL bus to Grand and Perkins, and walk into the park on Perkins. Best parking is at the boathouse lot near the spherical cage. Entry, via Bellevue near Children's Fairyland, is \$2 if the kiosk is occupied when you arrive (which it probably will be). Buy a 2-hour ticket and try to park in the boathouse lot, where no one checks how long cars sit.

Tilden Regional Park

Contra Costa County

Friday, October 5

Alan Kaplan, LNKPLN@earthlink.net,
510.526.7609 (messages)

Meet at 8:30 a.m. at Tilden Nature Area and Little Farm parking lot for a continuation of our bird names theme (common, commemorative, and scientific). Trail is generally level, or with gentle switchbacks and descent. Restrooms and water at start and midway.

MLK Jr. Regional Shoreline

Alameda County

Wednesday, October 10, 9 – 11:30 a.m.

Gary and Chris Bard,
chrisbard@earthlink.net, 510.301.2987

The shoreline offers excellent views of shorebirds, waders, and dabblers. Arrowhead Marsh is the home of Clapper Rails. In winter, large rafts of scaup and golden-eye float offshore. Occasionally, raptors soar overhead. The walking is on flat ground. Please bring a scope if you have one. Dress in layers. Rain cancels. Restroom is available near parking lot.

From I-880 south in Oakland, exit at Hegenberger Rd. Turn right onto Hegenberger, continue .7 mile across a small bridge over a channel, and turn right on Pardee Dr. Continue to Swan Way and turn left, then turn right into the park. Meet at the parking lot at the end of the road.

Briones Regional Park

Contra Costa County

Friday, October 12

Alan Kaplan, LNKPLN@earthlink.net,
510.526.7609 (messages)

Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the park's Bear Creek Rd. entrance (drive into the park, past the kiosk, to the farthest parking lot). Parking fee may apply. The habitat has all kinds of woodpeckers and sparrows. Trail is up and down, and could be uneven in places. Restrooms at the start. Bring water. \$

Coyote Hills Regional Park

Fremont, Alameda County

Saturday, October 13, 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Steve and Carol Lombardi, 925.785.0130
(cell), hot-rock@sbcglobal.net

We'll look for wintering shorebirds, waterfowl, and raptors as well as late migrants and other rarities that might be around. We'll walk 2-plus miles through the marsh and out to the shoreline on good, level trails. Water and restrooms are available. Directions: www.ebparks.org. Parking fee is \$5. \$

Upper Alameda Creek and Quarry Lakes

Alameda County

Saturday, October 20

Michelle Labbe and Jeremy Andersen,
413.687.1179 or 508.566.9555,
labbemichelle@gmail.com

Meet at the Union City BART station at 8:15 a.m. for this trip concentrating on upper Alameda Creek from Quarry Lakes to the Niles Staging Area. We may begin at the Union City Library Pond. We will ride on the north gravel and south paved sides of the creek, on gravel trails within Quarry Lakes, and sometimes on the street. Bring lunch and liquids. Bicycle helmet required. Reservations not necessary but an e-mail or phone call would be appreciated. Rain cancels.

Transit: Fremont train passes through MacArthur at 7:35 a.m. **Car:** From I-880 south, take exit 23 for Alvarado Niles Rd., turn left onto Alvarado Niles Rd., go 2.4 miles, and turn left onto Decoto Rd. Continue 0.2 mile, then turn right on Union Square and left into the BART lot.

Coyote Point Park

San Mateo County

Saturday, October 27, 9 a.m. – noon

Martha Wessitsh, 415.681.8059,
415.533.4470 (cell), martha@wessitsh.com

Meet at the parking lot next to the museum. We should see incoming shore-

birds and also land birds. Restrooms are available. There is a \$5 entrance fee. \$

Take Hwy. 101 south to San Mateo. Exit at Poplar Ave. and turn right onto Humboldt. At Peninsula Ave., turn right and go over the freeway. Stay straight at the light, and you will be on Coyote Point Dr.

San Francisco Bay with Dolphin Charters

Saturday, November 10

9:45 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Alan Ridley and Helen McKenna

Trip leaves from Berkeley Marina with many areas on the itinerary—the shorelines of Alcatraz Island, the Marin Headlands, Angel Island, the Marin Islands, and the Brothers and Sisters Islands—most of which are best observed from the water. In addition to wintering ducks, loons, grebes, and gulls, we expect to see resident cormorants, pelicans, and murre, as well as seals and sea lions and, with luck, an occasional porpoise. Dress in layers. Bring liquids and lunch. Trip is limited to 26 people. Cost: \$85 for GGAS members, \$95 for nonmembers. Register online, or reserve your spot by contacting John Trubino, GGAS Office Manager, 510.843.2222 or ggas@goldengateaudubon.org. John will send directions to registered participants. \$

San Joaquin National Wildlife Refuge

Stanislaus County

Saturday, November 24, 9 a.m.

Rusty Scalf; Steve Lombardi, 925.785.0130
(cell), hot-rock@sbcglobal.net

We will start with a stroll on the newly opened Pelican Nature Trail through seasonal wetlands, restored riparian woodlands, and stands of old-growth valley oaks. It could be very birdy, with many wintering sparrows and other birds. We'll reconvene a few miles away at Beckwith Rd. to look at Aleutian Cackling Geese, Sandhill Cranes, and various waterfowl. This part of the refuge is the key wintering area for Aleutian Cacklers in the Central Valley. For further information and directions: www.fws.gov/sanluis/sanjoaquin_info.htm.

Follow the map on the refuge website. We encourage carpooling. Use the GGAS Yahoo Carpool Group if you need or can offer a ride (<http://groups.yahoo.com/groups/GGACarPool>).



Early June marked the peak of passerine vagrant movements, which typically lag regular neotropical migrants by about a month. By late July, postnesting dispersal was well under way, and shorebirds were beginning their southbound migrations.

LOONS TO DUCKS

The biggest pelagic news was that the *Northern Gannet* (*Morus bassanus*), first located by PRBO researchers on SE Farallon Island (SF) on Apr. 25, continued through at least Jun. 24, when it was photographed basking on the rocks (PP, TMG). A Jul. 15 boat trip failed to locate the gannet but tallied a Laysan Albatross (DA). A Jul. 4 seawatcher from Pigeon Pt., SM, observed both a Pink-footed and a Black-vented Shearwater (RT).

As many as 5 Harlequin Ducks, 3 males and 2 females, lingered at PRNS Fish Docks, MRN (HBH, RS; mob). A male remained through Jul. 15 at Pescadero Cr. mouth, SM (GH). A Long-tailed Duck was observed by kayak at Pillar Pt., SM, on Jun. 3 (BK), and another oversummered at Coyote Pt., SM, beginning Jun. 27 (RT, LB; oob).

RAPTORS TO ALCIDS

A Pacific Golden-Plover returned to its regular wintering grounds at Shollenberger Park, SON, on Jul. 4 (RR), and 2 more visited Hayward RS, ALA, Jul. 21–24 (RCi; BR). Common Terns were reported on Jul. 5 and 8 from Radio Rd. in Redwood Shores, SM (RT, DP); on the 29th from San Leandro Marina, ALA (BR); and on the 30th from the Foster City shell bar (RT). An Arctic Tern appeared for a limited engagement at the San Leandro Marina, ALA, on Jun. 26 (BR). A Black Tern flew over the ocean near the Great Highway, SF, on Jul. 15 (PS).

A Rhinoceros Auklet made a rare foray bayside to Hayward RS, ALA, on Jul. 20 (BR), and a Marbled Murrelet followed suit on the 28th (JCh, DH). On the SM coast, 3 Tufted Puffins lingered offshore at Pigeon Pt. Jul. 4–25, and a 4th puffin flew in to join a flock of 5,000 Sooty Shearwaters at Pescadero Beach on the 18th (RT).



Townsend's Solitaire at Coyote Hills Regional Park.

DOVES TO THRASHERS

A White-winged Dove was spotted Jul. 16 flying over Hill Rd. in Morgan Hill, SCL (SR). On Jun. 1, a Yellow-billed Cuckoo was discovered in Bolinas, MRN (PP). Black Swift movements wrapped up by Jun. 3 with stragglers flying over Monte Bello OSP, SCL (GH); Blue Ridge Rd., SOL (CG); and Lower Crystal Springs Res., SM (DP). A Black-chinned Hummingbird turned up Jul. 9 along the Coyote Cr. trail at Silver Cr. Valley Rd., SCL (JP). A male Costa's Hummingbird visited a Terra Linda feeder, MRN, on Jul. 3 (KJR). An Eastern Kingbird was located on a fence wire near Pescadero, SM, on Jun. 2 (RT, LB). A Red-eyed Vireo was discovered during a Jun. 4 bird census in GGP, SF (JCl).

A female Purple Martin wandered over Coyote Pt., SM, on Jun. 4 (RT). Another martin was noted from Rohnert Park, SON, on the 16th (DS). A couple Bank Swallows were observed Jun. 30–Jul. 3 over Radio Rd. in Redwood Shores, SM (RT, LB). An unseasonal Townsend's Solitaire paused

Jun. 15–16 at the Coyote Hills RP Visitor Center, ALA (DD; JT).

WOOD WARBLERS TO FINCHES

The headline news on the warbler front was a *Worm-eating Warbler* (*Helminthos vermivorus*) banded on Jun. 10 at PRBO's Palomarin Field Station in Bolinas, MRN (oob, fide RCo). Spring migrants also included a Tennessee Warbler, 8 Northern Parulas, a couple Chestnut-sided Warblers, a Prairie Warbler, 2 Black-and-white Warblers, an Ovenbird, and 3 Yellow-breasted Chats. A Summer Tanager was located Jun. 8 near Stanford, SCL (RCa, fide SR; mob), and perhaps the same bird was relocated Jul. 19 near Palo Alto High School, SCL (RF).

This is proving to be a good year for Black-chinned Sparrows, with the Loma Prieta (SCZ/SCL) birds continuing through at least Jul. 1 (mob) and a lone singer entertaining birders Jun. 6–9 in Tilden RP, CC (BF; mob). Sage Sparrows turned up in some unusual spots, including Mt. Davidson, SF, Jun. 12–14 (DM, BF; mob); Lobos Dunes in the Presidio, SF, Jun. 16 (ME, PS); and Bedwell Bayfront Park, SM, Jun. 16 (DK). On Jul. 17, birders described a probable alternate-plumage male Lark Bunting in Sibley RP, CC (MS, JG).

The Rose-breasted Grosbeak count topped out at 13-plus individuals. Indigo Buntings were close behind with 8 reports. A Yellow-headed Blackbird turned up Jun. 27–28 at Las Gallinas Valley Sanitary District, MRN (JW; SK). Finally, numerous locales reported Lawrence's Goldfinches this summer, with the most unusual report from Glen Cyn. Park, SF, on Jun. 26 (DM).

See Birding Resources at www.goldengateaudubon.org, for complete sightings data.

Semicolons separate original observer(s) from subsequent observer(s). Abbreviation "mob" = many observers; "oob" = other observers. Information is compiled from BirdBox transcripts and regional listservs; the author apologizes for any errors or omissions.

Abbreviations for Observers: BB, Bill Bousman; BF, Brian Fitch; BK, Barbara Kossy; BR, Bob Richmond; CG, Cory Gregory; CH, Chris Hayward; DA, David Assmann; DD, Davor Desancic; DH, Derek Heins; DK, Dan Keller; DM, Dominik Mosur; DP, Don Pendleton; DS, Doug Shaw; GH, Garth Harwood; HBH, Hugh B. Harvey; JCh, Jim Chiropoulos; JCl, Josiah Clark; JG, Joel Goldman; JP, Janna Pauser; JT, Jerry Ting; JW, Jim White; KJR, Karen Jo Rippens; LB, Leonie Batkin; LK, Logan Kahle; MDF, Malia DeFelice; MD, Matthew Dodder; ME, Mark Eaton; MS, Maury Stern; PP, Peter Pyle; PS, Paul Saraceni; RCa, Robin Carle; RCi, Rich Cimino; RCo, Renee Cormier; RF, Rob Furrow; RR, Ruth Rudesill; RS, Rich Stallcup; RT, Ron Thorn; SK, Susan Kelly; SR, Steve Rottenborn; TMG, Todd McGrath

Abbreviations for Counties and Others: CC, Contra Costa; CP, County Park; Cr., Creek; Cyn., Canyon; DENWR, Don Edwards National Wildlife Refuge; EEC, Environmental Education Center; GGP, Golden Gate Park; L., Lake; MRN, Marin; Mt., Mount; N., North; NAP, Napa; NWR, National Wildlife Refuge; OSP, Open Space Preserve; PRBO, Pt Reyes Bird Observatory; PRNS, Pt Reyes National Seashore; Pt., Point; Rd., Road; Res., Reservoir; RP, Regional Park; RS, Regional Shoreline; S., South; SB, State Beach; SCL, Santa Clara; SCZ, Santa Cruz; SF, San Francisco; SFBBO, SF Bay Bird Observatory; SM, San Mateo; SOL, Solano; SON, Sonoma; SP, State Park; SR, State Reserve; WPCP, Water Pollution Control Plant

ber 22, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. To sign up, contact Volunteer Coordinator Noreen Weeden at nweeden@goldengateaudubon.org.

COASTAL CLEANUP DAY AT THREE GGAS SITES

On Saturday, September 15, thousands of volunteers will gather to clean up Bay Area shores and streams. Golden Gate Audubon is participating at three sites: Arrowhead Marsh at Martin Luther King Jr. Regional Shoreline in Oakland; Rheem Creek behind the Bayview Elementary School in San Pablo; and Pier 94 in San Francisco. Hours are 9 a.m. to noon. Be sure to wear closed-toed shoes and a hat. Supplies will be provided, but if you have buckets and reusable gloves and shopping bags, please bring them. For detailed directions to the three sites and meeting places, go to www.goldengateaudubon.org/volunteer.

JOIN THE BAY TRAIL PROGRAM

Four years ago, Golden Gate Audubon volunteers started setting up spotting scopes along the San Francisco Bay Trail in Albany and Richmond and showing the migratory and wintering shorebirds to trail users. The Birding the Bay Trail Program is as popular as ever with local walkers, joggers, and cyclists. We invite you to become a docent in this successful program. A training session for new volunteers will be held this fall. We will provide all the information you need to share with the public, and we can also make spotting scopes available prior to each two-hour session on the trail. To sign up for the training, contact Noreen Weeden at nweeden@goldengateaudubon.org.

Choose the Gull Online

Join other Golden Gate Audubon members who are downloading our newsletter from our website rather than receiving it in the mail. You will help save paper and reduce our expenses for printing and mailing. Best of all, the photographs in the online version are in color. When the next newsletter is published, we will e-mail you a link. To choose the Gull online, contact ggas@goldengateaudubon.org or 510.843.2222.

Anese Atkins-Henesly and Chanyah Gomer feign disgust over the bones they encountered while dissecting a Barn Owl pellet as part of Golden Gate Audubon's first "Wildlife Discoverers" Summer Camp this July. The intrepid pair actually showed no shyness while investigating the partially digested remains of a pocket gopher. Anese's mother later told us that each day Anese "excitedly told of her experiences. This was an unforgettable experience." The camp drew other young nature lovers, ages six through ten, from all over the East Bay. Campers birded by pedal boat on Lake Merritt, discovered bat rays at Arrowhead Marsh, uncovered salamanders in the redwoods of Joaquin Miller Park, and made friends while exploring the wonders of the outdoors. —*Marissa Ortega-Welch*



Travel with Golden Gate Audubon

To sign up for the trips below and to obtain an itinerary for the South Texas trip, contact Pat Kirkpatrick, GGAS travel coordinator, at patkirkpatrick14@gmail.com. From September 9 through October 16, contact her assistant, Alexis Hummel, at avargas542@aol.com.

FALL WISCONSIN HAWK WATCH

This raptor-watching trip, October 12–14, 2012, led by Rich Cimino of Yellowbilled Tours, will visit Port Washington–Harrington Beach on the shore of Lake Michigan to observe hawks and other Canadian prairie species during their fall migration. The group will bird the official raptor count location for the Western Great Lakes Bird and Bat Observatory and Wisconsin Society for Ornithology. Yellowbilled Tours will pick up participants in Milwaukee (hotel to be specified). Cost of \$239 includes ground transportation, park entry fees, guide service, and a \$50 tax-deductible donation to GGAS. Meals and lodging not covered. For further information, contact Rich Cimino, 925.353.0266 or Yellowbilledtours@gmail.com.

SOUTH TEXAS HOTSPOTS

Join Naturalist Journeys February 26–March 6, 2013, to explore prime birding locations in South Texas: Laguna Atacosa and Santa Ana national wildlife refuges, and South Padre Island, Estero Llano Grande, Bentsen Rio Grande, and Falcon state parks. These areas are legendary for attracting numerous bird species and for supporting other wildlife, including more than 300 butterfly species.

The trip begins in Alamo, Texas, with an afternoon of birding at the Llano Grande State Park, followed by a welcome dinner and meeting with guide Bob Behrstock. The group continues into the heart of the Rio Grande Valley Wildlife Corridor, where more than 300 species of birds have been recorded. At South Padre Island, the targets are rails and waterbirds such as egrets and herons. Venturing into the higher and more arid lands to the west yields desert birds and fly-by Muscovy Ducks. At King Ranch in Rockport, a local expert will take participants through the 825,000-acre property to look for Vermilion Flycatcher, Great Kiskadee, and Green Jay. A guided boat tour along the edges of the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge will search for Whooping Cranes and Roseate Spoonbills.

Cost, based on double occupancy, is \$2,590 from McAllen, Texas, and includes transportation (except airfare), all accommodations and most meals, guide services, and park and other entrance fees, plus a \$150 tax-deductible donation to GGAS. The trip is limited to 10 people, so grab your place soon.

passengers onto the bay, as well as tens of thousands of people watching onshore.

GGAS wanted to ensure that foot traffic wouldn't disrupt sensitive shorebird populations, like the threatened Snowy Plovers at Crissy Field. GGAS conservation activists were also concerned about impacts to birds that rely on the open water for resting and feeding.

In the settlement with GGAS, the city agreed to forego controversial plans for a floating Jumbotron screen in the waters off Aquatic Park. In parallel talks, America's Cup organizers promised to cordon off and monitor the Snowy Plover site and other ecologically sensitive areas, to prevent disruption of wildlife by race spectators.

The bird survey will be carried out over a three-year period by researchers from the U.S. Geological Survey. It will fill a gap in scientists' knowledge of bird populations on the bay's open water and how they respond to boat traffic and other disruptions.

"The America's Cup organizers have been extremely receptive to adopting measures to monitor and protect birds, other wildlife, and native plants during the races," Lynes said. "The settlement reflects our strong belief that policy and event planning should be based on sound science and incorporate a balanced approach between accommodating human activities and protecting and sustaining bird populations in the bay."

It is essential that more information be gathered about the effects of human activities on the bay. Particularly in winter, the San Francisco Bay draws large populations of feeding and resting birds such as Double-crested Cormorants, Greater and Lesser Scaups, Buffleheads, Surf Scoters, Western Gulls, and several species of grebes. These rafting birds rely on the bay—the most important estuary on the Pacific Flyway—to nourish and reenergize them for future migrations and breeding.

Ninety percent of the San Francisco Bay's wetlands and 40 percent of its open

water have been lost to landfill and human development since 1850. The remaining open water is heavily used by commercial ships, passenger ferries, and recreational boats.

Golden Gate Audubon had filed its appeal of the EIR with community groups including the Sierra Club, San Francisco Tomorrow, and Waterfront Watch. The groups spent months negotiating with the city and with race organizers, culminating in the July agreement.

Now, with the agreement in place, it's off to the races...and to the bird monitoring.

Dine Out in October to Benefit GGAS

Got an iPhone? Golden Gate Audubon will be featured on a new iPhone app in October (the app will soon be available for Android). PuurBuy is a mobile phone application that helps diners find restaurants that make a commitment to health and sustainability. Each restaurant has a "puurity" profile displaying its sustainability commitment and energy-efficiency practices, including whether the beef served is pasture-raised and the produce is organic. Flash the PuurBuy app at select restaurants in October to donate a percentage of your dining bill to GGAS. Find out more and download the app for free at www.puurBuy.com

Volunteers Recognized at Annual Party

About 40 volunteers gathered on June 23 for our Volunteer Appreciation Party at Lake Merritt in Oakland. Clif Bar provided MoJo bars for the event. The free raffle had wonderful prizes: several sets of binoculars from Scope City in San Francisco; a Barnes and Noble gift card from Coming of Age; a movie pass from National Audubon; a waterproof jacket from Patagonia; a backpack from Chris and Gary Bard; and iBird Pro software and an iPad from Mitch Waite Group. We thank all the generous donors for their support of our volunteers!

Donations

Many thanks to our generous donors! Donations from May 26, 2012, to July 25, 2012.

PEREGRINE FALCON (\$500 TO \$999)

Mary Martin, Teresa Stamm Batsel

LEAST TERN (\$200 TO \$499)

Cindy Jane Cobb, Diane Graydon, Laurence Malone, Sharon Morris

CLAPPER RAIL (\$100 TO \$199)

Michael Curtin, Larry De Grassi, Donald Dvorak, Jeffrey Edmunds, Mary French, Carrie Miller, Elizabeth Pulling, Linda Clark Vallee

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Spellman, Kathy Stiles, Katharine Swan, Karen Thompson, Barbara Tittle, Connie Torii, Alice Webber, Elliott Wright, Alexandra Yurkovsky

GIFTS IN HONOR OF

Ada Alnard, in honor of David Freund

Judith Dunham, in honor of Rusty Scalf and Emilie Strauss's Mono Lake trip

Lori Lewis, in honor of Su Cox and Cathy Keyes

BIRDATHON 2012

The following donor was inadvertently omitted from the July–August Birdathon Donors list:

Alan Kaplan

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ECO-EDUCATION from page 1

southeast San Francisco. Since its inception as the Martin Luther King Jr. Wetlands Project in 1999, the program has grown to include 11 Bay Area schools. But the original goal has remained: to provide in-depth, family-focused environmental education in schools that have limited resources.

The students in each Eco-Education class get started by doing a habitat assessment of their schoolyard. Then, over the course of the academic year, the class is given a series of opportunities to engage in wildlife observation and surveying, habitat restoration, and trash removal. A signature component of the program is creating a culture of conservation within the family. This past year we organized Coastal Cleanup Day and Earth Day events and family trips to both Muir Beach and Alcatraz—all of which included hands-on exploration and other activities to promote environmental awareness and stewardship.

Years of Eco-Education Program evaluation data show that wildlife discovery is what kids and their families remember most from their experiences in the field. This past year included many phenomenal discoveries. A Burrowing Owl and an American Crow engaged in an aerial battle above Paul Revere

Elementary in Bernal Heights. As we stood atop the Muir Beach headlands, a pair of Peregrine Falcons soared 20 feet above us, as three Red-tailed Hawks kited nearby. An Osprey circled above us at Pier 94 in San Francisco after snatching up a fish. We collected a mystery species of Gunnel fish from under a rock at Pier 94 and screamed “eel!” as we watched it wriggle in our container. An adult damselfly along Islais Creek in San Francisco emerged from its nymph-shaped exoskeleton and spread its wings before us (one mother kept it on a stick and carried it for hours!). In an amazing display of avian cooperation at Oakland’s Arrowhead Marsh, at least 20 Double-crested Cormorants took the lead to stir up a school of fish, with 10 Brown Pelicans in tow and terns swooping down around them. A Columbian Black-tailed Deer quietly crossed the path atop Vollmer Peak in Tilden Regional Park, only to bound away after being chased by five screaming kids who had never seen a deer!

So how do we inspire urban kids to care about the incredible biodiversity in the Bay Area? How do we motivate them toward environmentally responsible behavior? How do we create a lasting culture of conservation within their families?

Follow the Eco-Education Program equa-

tion: 1) bring kids outdoors as much as possible from an early age; 2) show them that wildlife is ever present; 3) allow them to be human animals outdoors but instill a deep respect for all living creatures (*yes, even germs and mosquitoes*); 4) encourage them to develop their own unique process of inquiry (*don’t just tell them what things are!*); 5) provide them with regular opportunities to amplify their sense of environmental stewardship (*kids love to plant, weed, and pick up trash*); 6) continuously illustrate the main daily actions that they can do at school, at home, and in their communities; 7) most importantly, radiate your own passion for and commitment to conservation.

—Anthony DeCicco, Education Director

Do you feel inspired to be an Eco-Education volunteer? Attend one of our training sessions: September 6 and 8, 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., in San Francisco; September 25 and 28, 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., in the East Bay. We can make special arrangements if you are unable to attend on these dates. RSVP to Anthony DeCicco, adecicco@goldengateaudubon.org.